

801 where, through a handshaking protocol, the information in the client database stored in storage device 506 on the viewer's computer 203 or Internet connected TV 106 is used to query the database of database server 103. Execution continues to block 802 where the database server searches its database for matches with the sponsors reported by the viewer. Execution continues to block 803 where links to sponsor Web pages are retrieved from the database server based on the information from the viewer. Execution continues to block 804 where an entire HTML page is created which contains links to all incentives to which the viewer is entitled, based on the amount of time he spent viewing specific content. Execution continues to block 805 where this Web page is then sent back to the viewer. At this time, the viewer can click on links to obtain coupons, discounts, special offers, etc.

Figure 9 shows an embodiment of the data that is contained in blocks in the database on the database server 103. For each sponsor, there is a block of records 900 that contains multiple records. One record contains the sponsor name. For each incentive, there are two records. One of these records contains the criteria for the viewer to receive the incentive such as a specific amount of time watching a particular broadcast. The other record contains a link to the particular incentive. Each incentive has a block of records such as 901 and 902. The block includes a record of the incentive name, and a number of other records that contain information about advertisements, coupons, discounts, etc. that should be offered to the viewer who has met the incentive criteria.

CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A method for allowing content to be broadcast without commercial interruption, yet letting the company or companies sponsoring the broadcast to offer purchasing incentives to viewers, the method comprising:
 - a. receiving a broadcast with embedded information about the broadcast;
 - b. extracting content from said broadcast, for displaying to the viewer;
 - c. extracting said embedded information from said broadcast;
 - d. storing said embedded information;
 - e. sending said embedded information and viewer information to a remote computer;
 - f. receiving specific incentives based on said embedded information and said viewer information sent.

2. A method for allowing content to be broadcast without commercial interruption, yet letting the company or companies sponsoring the broadcast to offer purchasing incentives to viewers, the method comprising:
- 5 a. receiving a broadcast with information about the broadcast imbedded into the broadcast at regular time periods, said information including timestamps;
- b. extracting content from said broadcast, for displaying to the viewer;
- 10 c. extracting said embedded information from said broadcast;
- d. incrementing counters for counting time slices during said time periods;
- e. storing said embedded information and said counter values;
- f. sending said embedded information and said counter values and viewer information to a remote computer;
- 15 g. receiving specific incentives based on said embedded information and said counter values and said viewer information sent.
3. A method for allowing content to be broadcast without commercial interruption, yet letting the company or companies sponsoring the broadcast to offer purchasing incentives to viewers, the method comprising
- 20 a. imbedding information about a broadcast along with the broadcast content;
- b. broadcasting said content with said embedded information to a remote viewer of the content.
- 25 4. The method of Claim 3 further comprising:
- a. receiving information from said viewer about said broadcast;
- b. sending specific incentives to said viewer based on said information received.
- 30 5. A method for allowing content to be broadcast without commercial interruption, yet letting the company or companies sponsoring the broadcast to offer purchasing incentives to viewers, the method comprising:

- a. imbedding information about the broadcast along with the broadcast content at regular time periods;
- b. broadcasting said content with said embedded information to a remote viewer of the content.

- 5 6. The method of Claim 5 further comprising:
- a. receiving information from said viewer about said broadcast;
 - b. receiving counter values for the number of time slices viewed by said viewer;
 - c. sending specific incentives to said viewer based on said information received and said counter values received.
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7. A method for allowing content to be broadcast without commercial interruption, yet letting the company or companies sponsoring the broadcast to offer purchasing incentives to viewers, the method comprising:
- a. receiving information about a broadcast from a remote viewer of said broadcast;
 - b. sending specific incentives to the remote viewer based on said information received.
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8. A method for allowing content to be broadcast without commercial interruption, yet letting the company or companies sponsoring the broadcast to offer purchasing incentives to viewers, the method comprising:
- a. receiving information about a broadcast from a remote viewer of said broadcast;
 - b. receiving counter values for the number of time slices viewed by the viewer;
 - c. sending specific incentives to the remote viewer based on said information received and said counter values received.
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9. A method for allowing content to be broadcast without commercial interruption, yet letting the company or companies sponsoring the broadcast to offer purchasing incentives to viewers, the method comprising:
- a. receiving information about a broadcast from a remote viewer of said broadcast;
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b. searching a database for information about sponsors of the content of said broadcast and the incentives offered by said sponsors;

c. creating a Web page containing links to all sponsor incentive websites and to specific incentives based on said database information and said information received from said viewer;

d. sending said Web page back to said viewer.

10. A method for allowing content to be broadcast without commercial interruption, yet letting the company or companies sponsoring the broadcast to offer purchasing incentives to viewers, the method comprising:

a. receiving information about a broadcast from a remote viewer of said broadcast;

b. receiving counter values for the number of time slices viewed by said viewer;

c. searching a database for information about sponsors of the content and the incentives offered by said sponsors;

d. creating a Web page containing links to all sponsor incentive websites and to specific incentives based on said database information and said information received and said counter values;

e. sending said Web page back to said viewer.